

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-07 IO-13 MED-02 NSAE-00 PA-01

DHA-02 SCA-01 OES-07 USIA-06 PRS-01 CIAE-00

HEW-04 AID-05 DODE-00 AS-01 /060 W

-----017878 010456Z /12

R 010303Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1789

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION TOKYO 25 JUN BEING REPEATED FOR

YOUR ACTION/INFO

QUOTE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, JP, RP

SUBJECT: JAPANESE CHOLERA EPIDEMIC HURTING PHILIPPINE TOURISM

1. SUMMARY: THE JAPANESE CHOLERA SCARE, AND THE REPORTS THAT THE DISEASE ORIGINATED IN THE PHILIPPINES IS HURTING LOCAL TOURISM. THE GOP TAKES EXCEPTION TO THE WAY THIS EPISODE IS BEING TREATED IN THE JAPANESE PRESS, AND HAS ISSUED A NOTE-VERBALE ASKING THE GOJ TO MUZZLE THE PRESS AND DENY THE PHILIPPINE ORIGIN OF THE DISEASE. THE INCIDENT COULD STRAIN RP/JAPAN RELATIONS ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EMBASSY COUNSELOR. END SUMMARY.

2. THE JAPANESE PRESS ALLEGATIONS THAT THE CURRENT CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN ARIDA CITY, JAPAN ORIGINATED FROM THE PHILIPPINES HAS THE PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (DOT) AND THE HOTEL INDUSTRY EXTREMELY CONCERNED. REPORTS VARY CONSIDERABLY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT SUPPOSEDLY ANYWHERE FROM 1,000 TO 5,000 JAPANESE TOURISTS HAVE CANCELLED CHARTERED TRIPS TO THE PHILIPPINES IN THE PAST WEEK, AND THE TREND IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. IF THE JAPANESE PUBLIC'S CONCEPTION OF THE PHILIPPINES AS A HEALTH HAZARD IS NOT REVERSED, THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THE LOCAL HOTEL INDUSTRY WHICH HAS A GLUT OF ROOMS, AND HUGE LOANS TO AMORTIZE AFTER THE 1976 HOTEL BUILDING BOOM.

3. LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE REFUTING THE ALLEGATION THAT THE CHOLERA CAME FROM THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE, AND JAPANESE PRESS REPORTING HAS BEEN SEVERELY CRITICIZED. THE DOT HAS EVEN ELICITED FROM THE REGIONAL WHO OFFICE A STATEMENT THAT THE CHOLERA OUTBREAK SHOULD NOT HINDER TRAVEL BETWEEN JAPAN AND ITS NEIGHBORS.

4. THE CURRENT INCIDENT COULD ALSO HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS ON RP/JAPAN RELATIONS. SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ROMULO CALLED IN JAPANESE AMBASSADOR MIKANAGI TODAY, JUNE 24, TO PRESENT A NOTE-VERBALE (REPORTEDLY PREPARED BY THE DOT) PROTESTING THE JAPANESE PRESS TREATMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THIS INCIDENT. ACCORDING TO JAPANESE COUNSELOR TANIGUCHI, THE NOTE CITED "DRASTICALLY REDUCED" TOURISM, "CANCELLED CHARTER FLIGHTS", AND THE PLIGHT OF THE LOCAL HOTELS. IT THEN ASKED THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE FIRM STEPS TO CONTROL MISREPRESENTATION OF THE INCIDENT IN THE PRESS. IT ALSO ASKED THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE A STATEMENT REFUTING THE PHILIPPINE ORIGIN OF THE CHOLERA. TANIGUCHI TOLD EMBOFF IT WOULD PROBABLY BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR JAPANESE GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE PHILIPPINE REQUESTS. HE FEARS THE GOP WILL CONTINUE TO REACT STRONGLY TO THIS CRISIS AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON OVERALL RP/JAPANESE RELATIONS COULD BE SIGNIFICANT. TANIGUCHI SAID HIS EMBASSY NOW FEELS, AFTER THE ROMULO VISIT THIS MORNING, THAT DAILY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPRESS COLUMNIST VALENCIA'S ARTICLES ON THIS EPISODE, WHICH HAVE BEEN STRIDENTLY ANTI-JAPANESE, ACCURATELY REFLECT PRESIDENT MARCOS' AND SECRETARY ROMULO'S OPINIONS ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE. STULL UNQUOTE  
STULL

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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